

CRITICAL THINKING IN LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING (CT)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE - E-TEACHER SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM UNIVERSITY OF OREGON, DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS, AMERICAN ENGLISH INSTITUTE

Course Overview

This course is designed to deepen participants' understanding of the theory and applied use of critical thinking principles and practices in the EFL classroom. Course participants will

- read and discuss professional information and articles to develop a deeper understanding of current topics in language pedagogy as they relate to general critical thinking skills
- identify, evaluate, and select web-based materials and tools for use in the classroom
- interact with colleagues regionally and internationally who share similar pedagogical interests
- create classroom materials and projects that demonstrate an understanding of course topics
- adapt and enhance existing materials so that they are culturally and age-appropriate for their schools' local curricula.

Special requirements: Appropriate for teachers of all audiences. This is an advanced course with a demanding reading and writing load. Participants should be prepared to apply new knowledge to local curricula, units, and lessons.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, participants should be able to

- understand and explain critical thinking concepts and patterns
- identify relevant resources for developing and using critical thinking
- identify and analyze teaching techniques and materials to incorporate critical thinking in teaching and learning
- apply critical thinking to classroom teaching and materials development; redesign and implement instructional units and lesson plans with activities that require critical thinking

Course Scope and Sequence

Week 1: Orientation, getting to know the UO Blackboard system; introductory discussions: definitions of critical thinking, intellectual traits

Week 2: Frameworks for critical thinking; Course Project Part 1A: Analyzing a course using the elements of reasoning

Week 3: Intellectual standards and the Socratic method; Course Project Part 1B: Analyzing a course using the intellectual standards

Week 4: Lesson plans and instructional strategies; Critical thinking (CT) objectives; establishing a lesson plan baseline

Week 5: Preparing to redesign instruction to include CT; Course Project, Part 2A: Incorporating CT into a lesson plan

Week 6: Teacher self-assessment; developing intellectual traits; Course Project, Part 2B:
Revising a lesson plan

Week 7: Assessment (formative, summative); Course Project, Part 3A: Redesigning a unit plan

Week 8: Constraints on teaching CT; student self-assessment; Course Project, Part 3B:
Redesigning a unit plan

Week 9: Course Project, Part 4: Creating an action plan; self-assessment and reflection

Week 10: Course wrap-up

Course Requirements for Certificate of Completion

Course participants will be required to

- read assigned texts and submit at least two posts a week that demonstrate understanding of key concepts. A variety of discussion topics will be available each week on pedagogical issues, and practical teaching tips and techniques
- complete a series of weekly tasks. The work will be cumulative in the sense that it is all part of a term-long process, building toward the final project
- create a final project that consists of a lesson plan, a unit plan, and an action plan
- give constructive feedback on peers' final projects

This class is pass/no pass. Participants receive a final score (maximum = 100 percent) at the end of the course. Participants with a final score of 70 percent or higher will pass the course.

Participants each receive an overall percentage score and grade for this class based on work in three areas: online discussions (25 percent of the total grade), weekly tasks (50 percent), and final project (25 percent). Instructors provide feedback in a combination of points and written comments.

Sample Materials and Resources

- *Definition of Critical Thinking*, by Steven D. Schafersman
- "The Four Domains of Critical Thinking," excerpted from *Critical Thinking: How to Prepare Students for a Rapidly Changing World*, by Richard Paul
- *Questioning: An Effective Teaching Method*, by Imogene Ramsey and Carol Gabbard
- Articles on critical and multi-perspective thinking from the *English Teaching Forum* journal, americanenglish.state.gov/english-teaching-forum